

**Abstract**

Calls are screened on the basis of a priority assigned to the calling party and a current cost (monetary or opportunity) to a communications service subscriber. For example, a calling line identification or a PIN is used to identify the calling party and to find a priority level assigned to the calling party by the subscriber. An applicable billing category is  
5 determined (e.g., a night or weekend, peak, or mobile to mobile billing category). An unused amount of air time or message units in a basic allotment of message units or air time is determined. If, given the amount of remaining message units or the cost of message units, the priority level assigned to the calling party justifies call completion; the user equipment of the calling party is connected to the user equipment of the subscriber. Otherwise, the user  
10 equipment of the calling party is connected to a message service or call completion is denied.